



\$2.95 #9

Noodwick™

*A World
Without
Piffany*



Nodwick

in:

A World Without Ziffany

THERE IT IS!
WE'VE ALMOST
MADE IT!

THAT'S THE
CLEFT OF THE
COSMOS?

INDEED, IT
IS WHERE WE MUST
DEPOSIT THE TALISMAN;
IT BELONGS TO ANOTHER
PLANE OF EXISTENCE.

SO THIS CLEFT
IS A METAPHYSICAL
WASTE DISPOSAL
AREA?

OH, HEAVENS, NO! IT'S A USEFUL
TOOL FOR RETURNING OBJECTS AND
BEINGS TO THEIR NATIVE UNIVERSES.
IN THIS CASE, A WIZARD BROUGHT
FORTH AN OBJECT WHICH IS ANATHEMA
TO OUR WORLD. WE SHALL MAKE
THINGS RIGHT!



NOT BAD. YOU SHOULD BE ADEQUATE WHEN YOU TAKE UP YOUR TEACHING POSITION AT TEMPLE TOMORROW.

COME AGAIN? WHAT TEACHING POSITION?

PIFFANY HAS BEEN ADVENTURING FOR FAR TOO LONG. SHE SHOULD RETURN TO OUR ORDER AND INSTRUCT THOSE IN NEED OF SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE. WE ARE RECALLING HER.

THEY CAN'T DO THAT! CAN THEY?

LADY, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE, BUT...

STOP IT, ARTAX! I SHOULD'VE TOLD YOU GUYS WHEN I WAS GIVEN NOTICE LAST WEEK...



DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO GO?

WELL, I--

HER CASE HAS ALREADY BEEN HEARD BY THE COUNCIL OF HIEROPHANTS. SHE WASN'T ABLE TO CONVINCE THEM THAT HER WORK "IN THE FIELD" HAD VALUE.

NOW DON'T GO AND GET YOUR PRAYER BEADS IN A KNOT. WE JUST--

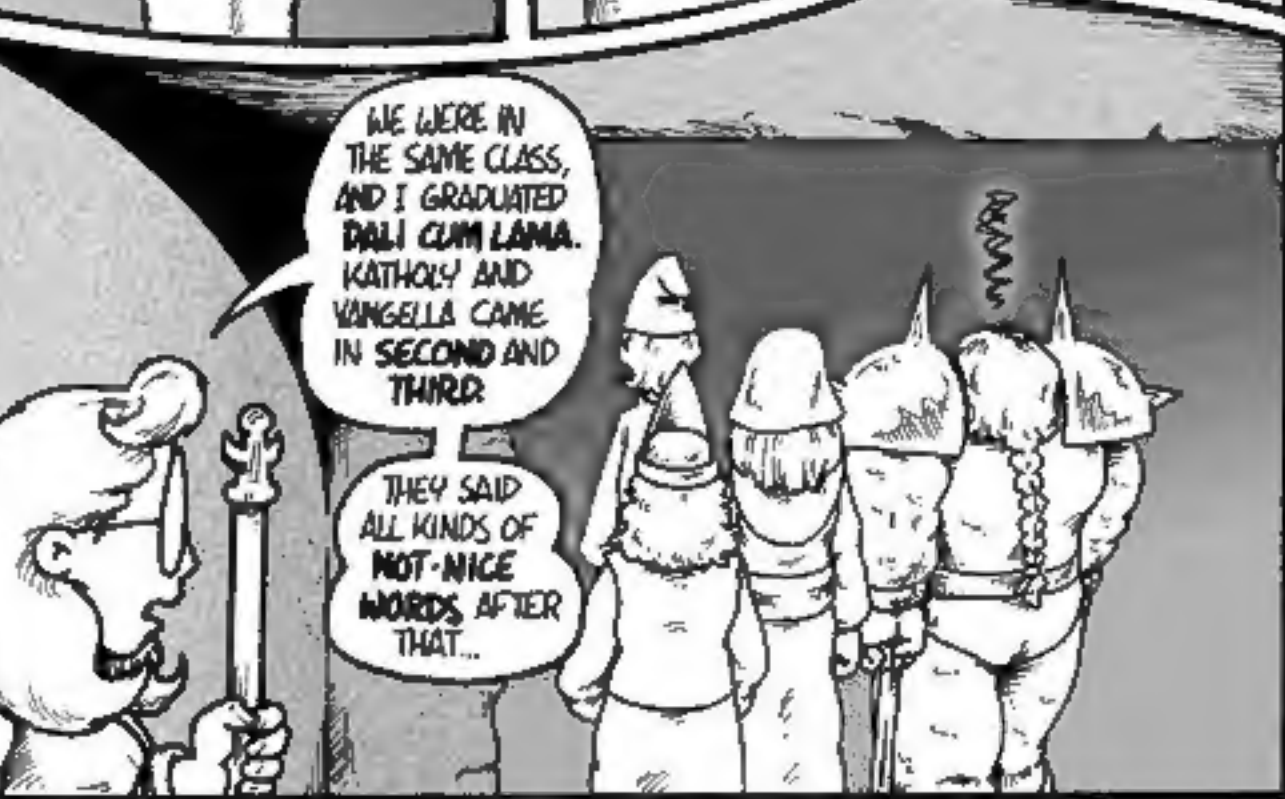
YOU SHOULD GET ON WITH THE JOB YOU WERE HIRED TO DO! THE CLEFT AWAITS!



I DETECT A LITTLE HISTORY BETWEEN YOU AND THE NUNS O' FUN, THERE.

WE WERE IN THE SAME CLASS, AND I GRADUATED DALI CUM LAMA. KATHOLY AND VANGELLA CAME IN SECOND AND THIRD.

THEY SAID ALL KINDS OF NOT-NICE WORDS AFTER THAT...



BEHOLD THE CLEFT OF
THE COSMOS! WE WHO CANNOT
FATHOM ITS CREATION CALL UPON
ITS SILENT WISDOM. DELIVER WHAT
HAVE BROUGHT TO ITS NEEDED PLACE
IN THE FABRIK OF WORLDS!

OH WHY! IT'S AMAZING
THAT PIFFANY CAME FROM
THE SAME RELIGIOUS ORDER
AS THESE TWO GASBAGS! IT'LL
BE HARD TO GET ALONG
WITHOUT HER.

I'VE GOT AN IDEA.
WE'LL PROVE THAT WE NEED
HER IF WE'RE GOING TO KEEP
ON DOING "GOOD DEEDS"
LIKE THIS ONE!

HOW?

WATCH.

...AND SO WE COMMIT THIS OBJECT TO
THE WILL OF THE GODS! DELIVER THE
CHEST TO THE CLEFT OF THE COSMOS!

OH, NO!
I'M TRIPPING
OVER A ROCK!
WHOOPS!

UH-OH! NODWICK FELL IN AND HE'S PROBABLY HURT OR DEAD AGAIN. IT'S A GOOD THING PUFFY'S HERE TO HELP HIM! OH, WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT HER?

NODWICK!
OH, GOOD GOSHNESS...

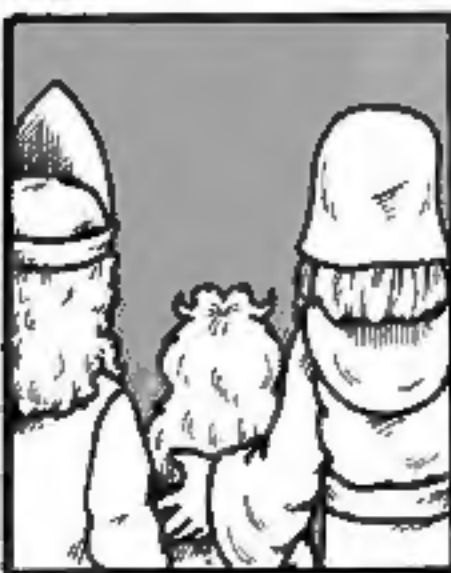
I'M AFRAID THAT NO CLERIC CAN HELP YOUR HENCHMAN NOW, AS HE HAS PASSED BEYOND TO ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE. IF THE GODS WILL IT, HE MAY FIND HIS WAY BACK SOMEDAY... BUT NO ONE WE KNOW OF HAS EVER RETURNED FROM SUCH A JOURNEY. I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS.

BUT... WE'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM! HE WAS OUR HENCHMAN AND A GOOD ONE, TOO!

I'VE READ THE CONTRACTS HENCHMEN WORK UNDER. UNFAIR AS THEY ARE, THEY RELEASE YOU FROM ANY OBLIGATION TO RESCUE HIM. BESIDES, YOU ARE TOO VALUABLE TO THE CHURCH TO RISK YOUR LIFE ON SUCH A FOOL-HARDY QUEST.

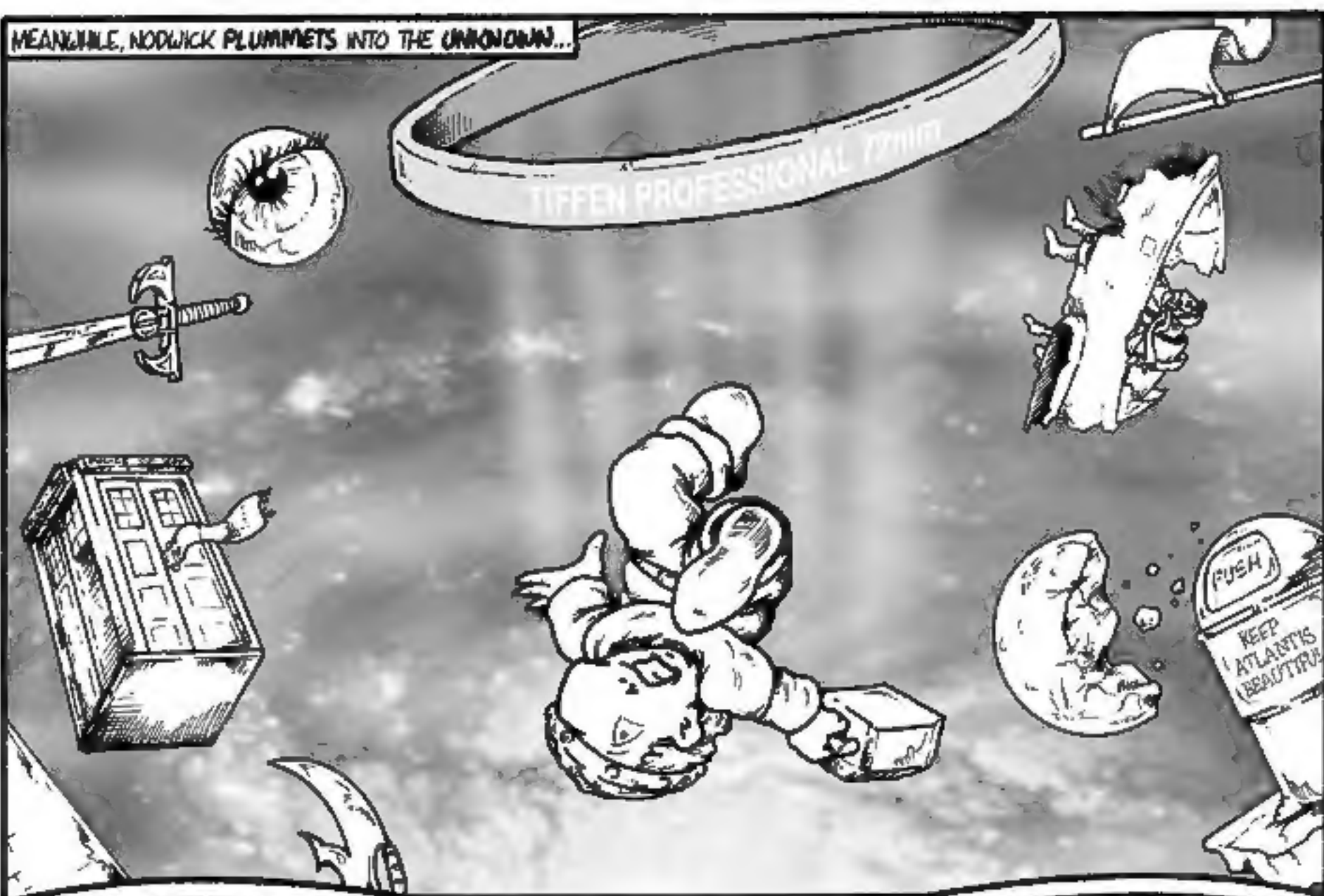
AGREED WE SHALL LEAVE NOW.

WE THANK YOU FOR ACCOMPANYING OUR SISTER ON HER JOURNEYS. I'M SURE HER EXPERIENCES WILL ENRICH HER TEACHING TECHNIQUES. MAY THE FACE OF GOODNESS SHINE UPON YOU.



THIS SUCKS...

MEANWHILE, NODWICK PLUMMETS INTO THE UNKNOWN...



...AND FINDS HIMSELF IN A FAMILIAR-LOOKING CAVERN.



OOOHH... MY HEAD
HASN'T SPUN LIKE THIS
SINCE THAT RUN-IN WE
HAD WITH AN ORCISH
BOWLING TEAM...



OOOOKAH...

I THINK I'LL
JUST GO JUMP IN THAT
POOL A FEW MORE TIMES
UNTIL I FIND SOMEPLACE
THAT DOESN'T LOOK
LIKE A RAVE PARTY
FOR THE GOTHICALLY
HOMICIDAL!



NO MORTAL ESCAPES
THE HAND OF BAPHUM'AL,
GOD OF THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING
DARKNESS! YOU WILL BE TAKEN
BACK TO THE CITADEL FOR
PUNISHMENT...OR EXECUTION!



ER...LOOK, I'M NOT
FROM AROUND HERE.
I JUST WANT TO--

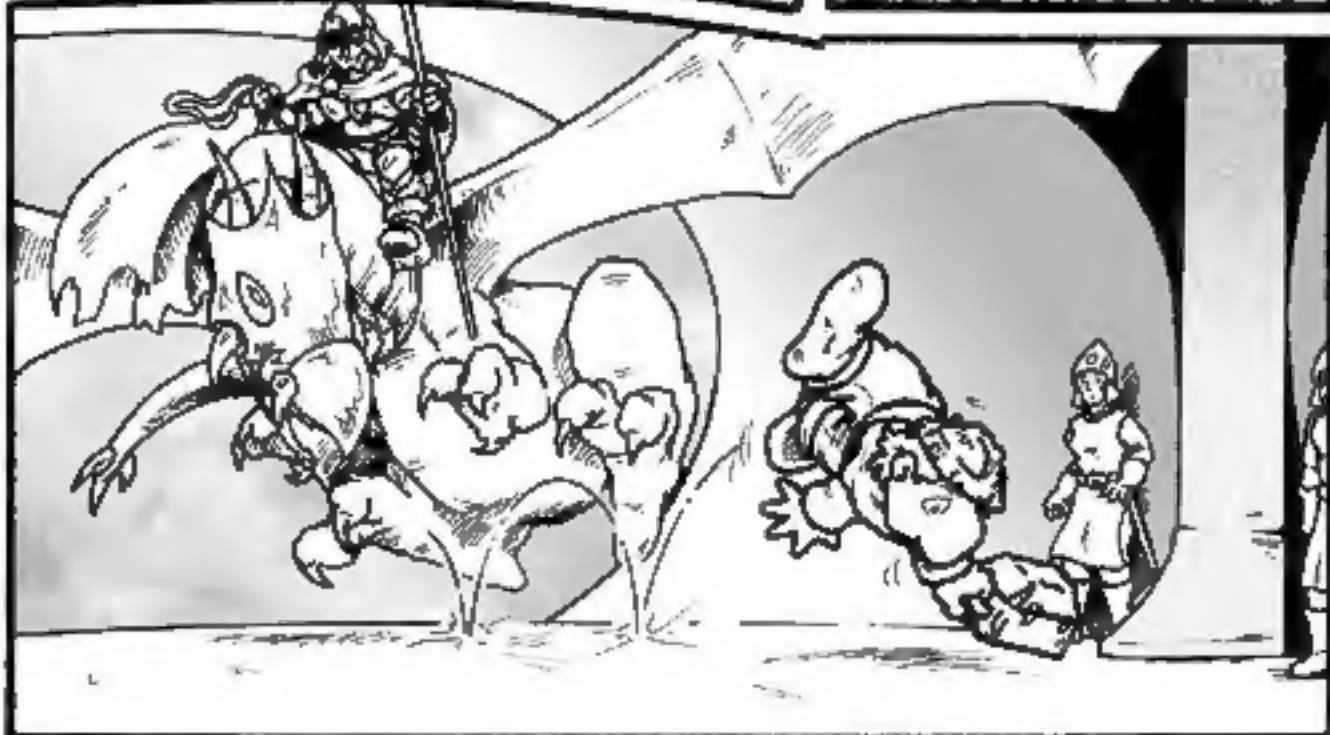
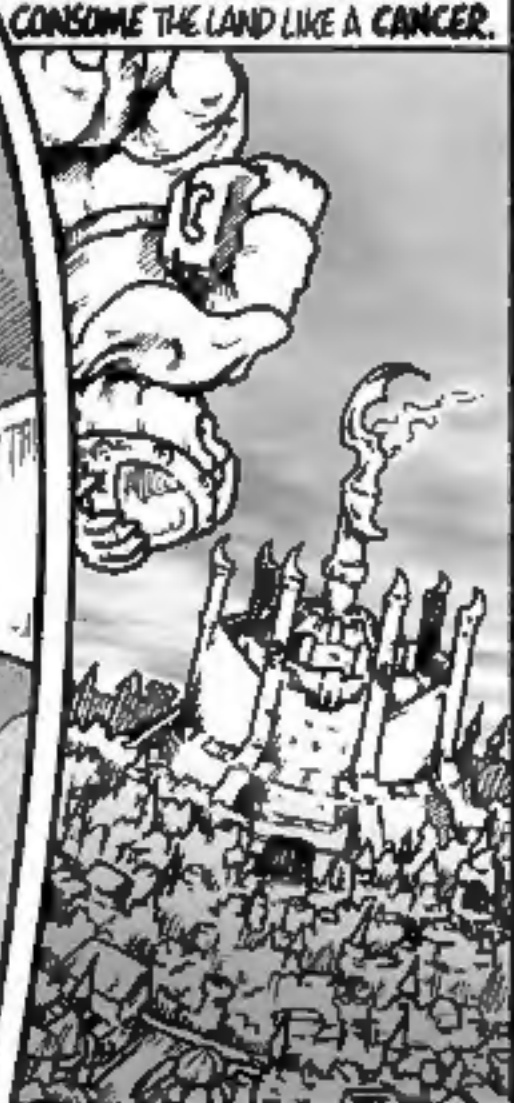
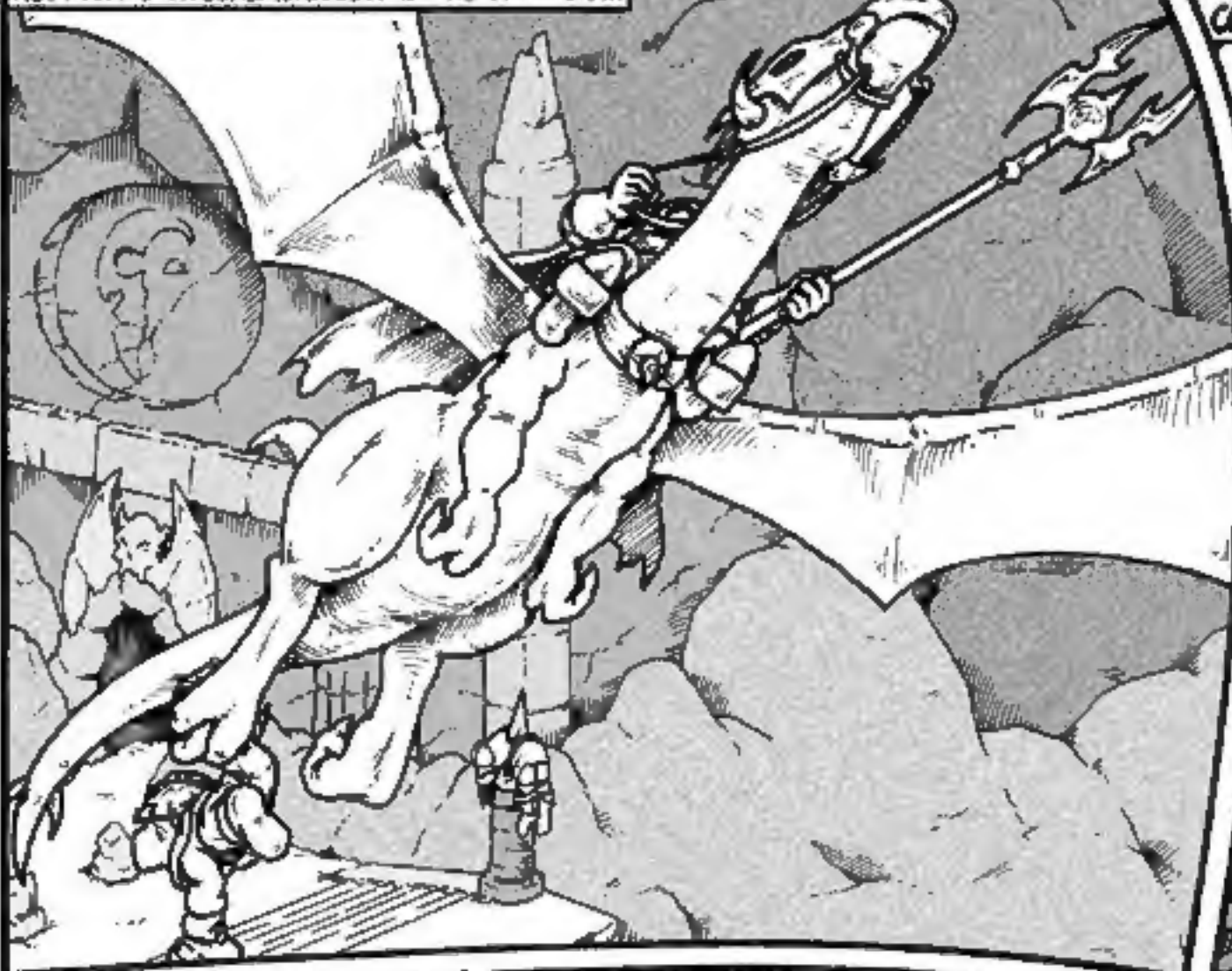


--SEE THIS CITADEL
OF YOURS. IT MUST BE
LOVELY THIS TIME
OF YEAR...



NODWICK IS UN CEREMONIOUSLY BORNE SKYWARD...

...TOWARDS A CITY THAT SEEMS TO CONSUME THE LAND LIKE A CANCER.



LEGIONNAIRES! ESCORT THAT INSECT TO THE HALL OF JUDGEMENT! I'LL INFORM THE HAND OF BAPHUMA'AL THAT A PRISONER AWAITS HIS ATTENTION.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CONFESS YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS. ANY DEVIATION FROM THE TRUTH WILL RESULT IN SWIFT RETRIBUTION AND POSSIBLY DEATH. TELLING THE TRUTH IS NO GUARANTEE OF SAFETY. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SCREAM AND BEG FOR MERCY, BUT THAT IS OFTEN COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO DIE, BUT NOT UNTIL AN AGENT OF THE STATE HAS UTILIZED A WEAPON OF SOME KIND ON YOUR PERSON. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THESE RIGHTS AS THEY HAVE BEEN READ TO YOU?



ER, NOT PARTICULARLY, I--

THE QUESTION WAS JUST
A FORMALITY ANYWAY.

IT WAS
NICE
KNOWING
YOU!

'BYE!

CLINK

GREAT... THE LAST
PERSON I WANT TO SEE
IS ANYONE RELATED TO
BAPHUM'AL?

HE MUST BE THE
REASON THIS WORLD IS SO
CHARMING. I WONDER
IF ANYONE TRIED TO
STOP HIM--

SO! YOU
DARE TO
ATTEMPT ESCAPE
FROM THE **BLACK
CITADEL!**

*SEE ISSUE #7

WELL, NOT REALLY, BUT IF
YOU GIVE ME A **HEAD START**, I'D BE
HAPPY TO GIVE IT A WHIR--

SILENCE!! YOU SHALL--
WAIT... AREN'T YOU A... A
HENCHMAN?

UM, YEAH, WHAT--

**ALL HENCHMEN
WERE WIPED OUT** YEARS
AGO, OR SO WE THOUGHT! WHAT
IS YOUR NAME, WORM?

IT'S, AH, **NODWICK**.
ACTUALLY--

LIAR! IMPOSSIBLE!
YOU INSULT ME WITH YOUR
FALSEHOODS!!

TOMORROW, I SHALL
DEAL WITH YOU **PERSONALLY!**
PREPARE FOR YOUR **FINAL
SUNRISE**, HENCHMAN!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR...

GOOD MORNING,
SISTER **PIFFANY**.
ARE YOU READY FOR
ORIENTATION?

SACRED
OCCUPATIONAL
CENOBITICUS ORDER
OF GOODNESS

I SUPPOSE
SO...

SIGH...

OH, COME NOW. YOU'LL
FEEL BETTER ONCE YOU'RE
USED TO TEMPLE LIFE AGAIN.
NO MORE DUCT TAPING THOSE
MORONIC ASSOCIATES OF
YOURS. NO MORE KEEPING
COMPANY WITH MENCHMEN!

COME
ALONG! YOU'VE
GOT A BUSY DAY
AHEAD OF YOU.

HERE SHE
IS, REVEREND
MATRON.

GREETINGS, SISTER PIFFANK!
YOU WILL BE TEACHING OUR DIVINITY
FOR UNDERCONSCIENTED AND NAUGHTY
CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAM. THIS IS
YOUR TEXT OF UNIVERSAL PANTHEONIC
PHILOSOPHY FROM WHICH YOU WILL
INSTRUCT YOUR STUDENTS. DO YOU
HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

UM, WHEN IS
ORIENTATION?

YOU JUST
HAD IT.

HERE IS YOUR
CLASSROOM.

KATHOLY ASSURES ME THAT
YOU'LL DO WONDERS WITH
THEM. LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED
ANYTHING AND I'LL SEE IF IT'S
IN THE BUDGET.

EET!

ER...HI. MY
NAME IS TIFFANY,
AND...

OH, DEAR...

SOUNDS LIKE THE
KIDS ARE EXTRA
SPUNKY TODAY!

I GIVE HER FOUR
HOURS BEFORE SHE
PUTS IN A TRANSFER
TO A PLAGUE
HOSPITAL.

SMASH!

GOUGE!

WHAMMM!

CRASH!

BITE!

SPLAT!

POW!

KARUNCH!

GRRROWWWW!!!

THE NEXT DAY, IN A PARALLEL DIMENSION'S PRISON...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S
MORE ALARMING...

...BEING A PRISONER
IN A DUNGEON RUN BY
BAPHUMA'AL...

...OR THE FACT THAT
MY PAL HERE IS SERVING
TIME FOR LITTERING.

BEHOLD THE FACE
BEHIND THE HOOD OF JUDGEMENT
AND TREMBLE!

YEAGAR?
IS THAT
YOU?

HOW DO YOU KNOW
MY TRUE NAME?!

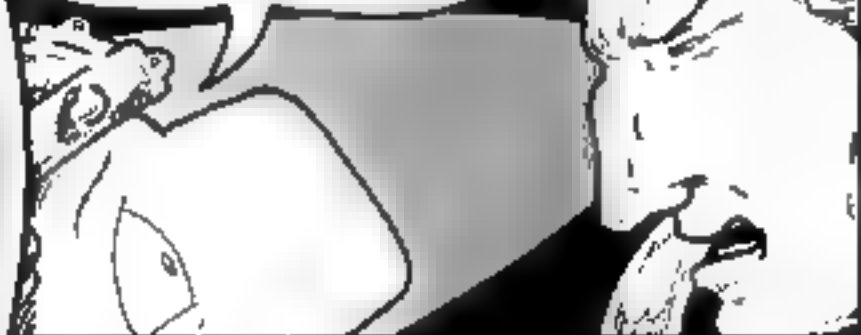
BECAUSE I'VE WORKED WITH
Y--ER, I MEAN, BECAUSE I
NEVER FORGET A FACE?

YOU CANT BE NODWICK! HE
WAS EATEN BY GIANT FERAL SIRENS
A FEW DAYS AFTER ARTAX AND
I HIRED HIM!

YEAH, BUT PIFFANY PUT
ME BACK TOGETHER, REMEMBER?

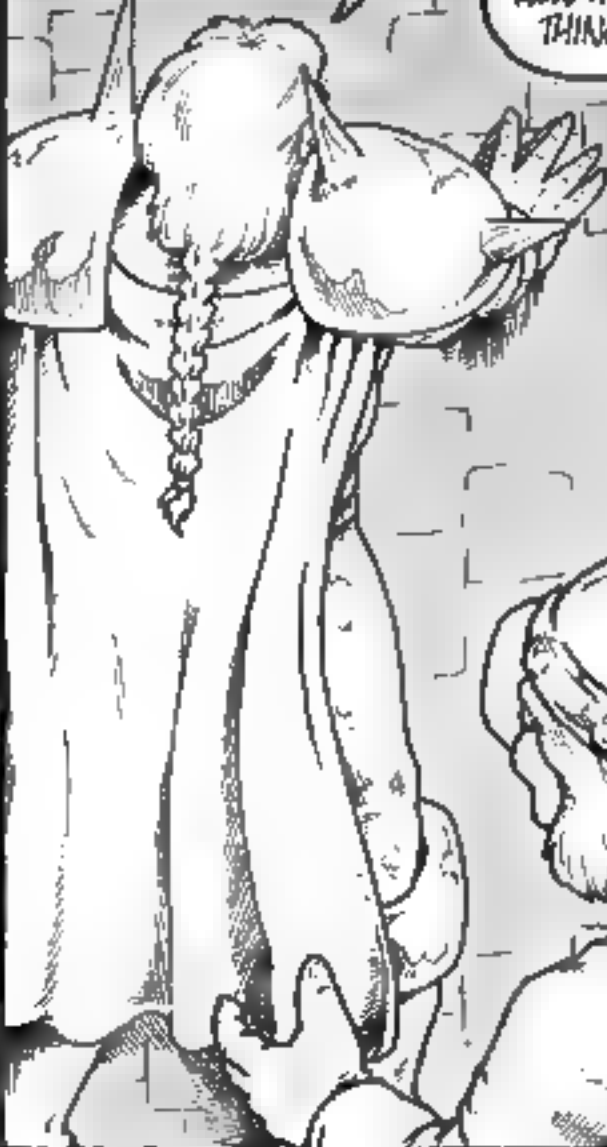
WHO?

OH, UM... A WANDERING CLERIC.
SHE CAME ALONG RIGHT AFTER YOU
LEFT ME FOR DEAD... HONEST.



WE COULD'VE USED A
DECENT CLERIC. WE WENT THROUGH
A LEGION OF HENCHMEN AFTER YOU.
WE WERE BANNED FROM THE ADVENTURER'S
GUILD AFTER OUR
EIGHTY-SECOND ONE.

IF I MAY
ASK, WHAT
HAPPENED TO
YOU? I MEAN, YOU
RUN THIS CITADEL-
THING, RIGHT?



WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I WAS GIVEN
THE POWER TO CONQUER WHEN I STUCK MY HAND
IN THE GAUNTLET OF SUPREMACY.

OF COURSE, I
HAD TO PLEDGE
MYSELF TO
BAPHUMAT'AL IF
I WANTED TO
AVOID ITS
CURSE, BUT--

GAPE IN
AWAY! YOU
ARE IN THE
PRESENCE OF
ARTAX THE
ALL-SEEING
AND ALL-
KNOWING!



HEY, ART. GUESS
WHO SHOWED UP OUTTA
NOWHERE?

NODWICK THE
HENCHMAN. DUH. DID YOU
MISS MY "ALL-SEEING AND
ALL-KNOWING" BIT?





GREETINGS,
NODWICK.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE
HOW DELIGHTED I AM
TO SEE YOU.

NOW, LET'S DISCUSS
HOW WE CAN HELP EACH
OTHER, SHALL WE?



THAT VERY MOMENT,
AT PIFFANK'S SECOND DAY
OF SCHOOL....

SO, WHO CAN TELL
ME THE THREE TENETS
OF GETTING ALONG WITH
YOUR NEIGHBORS?
DARION?

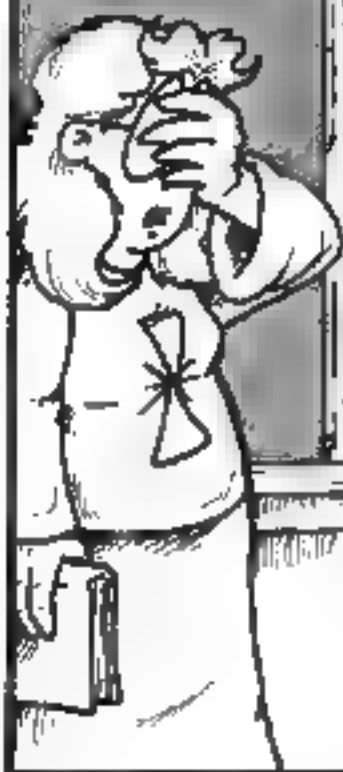


RESPECT THEIR
STRENGTHS, EXPLOIT THEIR
WEAKNESSES, AND CRUSH
THEM WHEN THEY ARE OF
NO FURTHER USE!



YOUR DADDY IS
**MALHORAK THE
SOUL-KILLER,**
ISN'T HE?

YEAH!
AFTER
SCHOOL, HE'S
GONNA SHOW
ME HOW TO
USE **HOT
POKERS** ON
PRISONERS!



I COMMAND YOU TO
LET RUSSA USE THE
RESTROOM AND GET A
DRINK OF WATER!

DENY ME, AND I
SHALL CAUSE YOU
UNENDING RAIN!!

RUSSA!
WHAT DID I
TELL YOU ABOUT
LETTING YOUR
DEMONIC
POSSESSION
GET OUT OF
HAND?

"KEEP IT
IN MY QUIET
PLACE" I'M
SORRY, MISS
PIFFANY.

LET'S MOVE ON TO
SOMETHING ELSE, M'KAY?

AH! GOOD DEEDS!
WHO CAN TELL ME WHAT
A GOOD DEED IS?

STUPID?

A SIGN OF
WEAKNESS?

GOOD IS
DUMB!

MY DADDY
SAYS GOOD DEEDS
STUNT MY GROWTH!

A GOOD
BLEED IS WHEN
YOU GET 'EM
IN THE NECK!

MY BROTHER
DID A GOOD
DEED ONCE.
I THINK HE'S
STILL IN
MOMMY'S
DUNGEON.

NO, NO, NO!
A GOOD DEED IS
WHEN YOU HELP SOME-
ONE OR GIVE SOMEONE
SOMETHING FOR NO
REASON OTHER THAN
YOU WANT THEM TO
FEEL NICE!

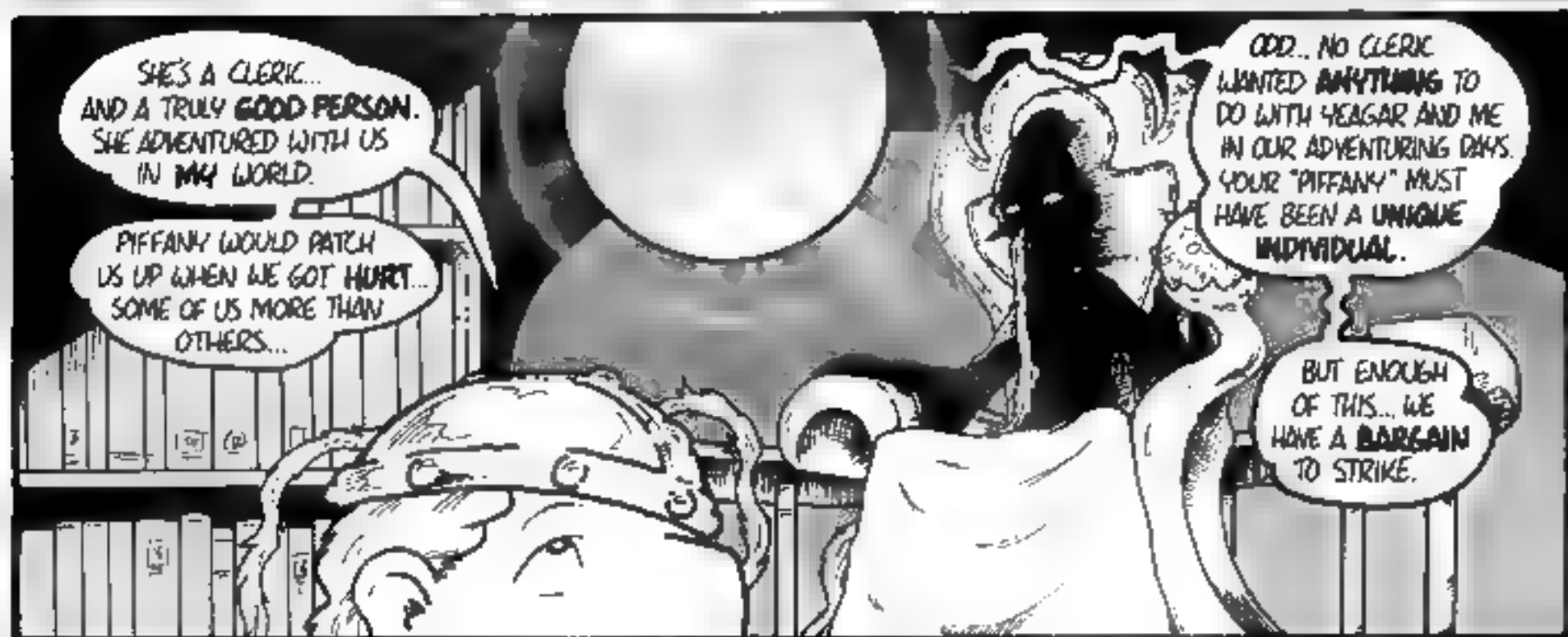
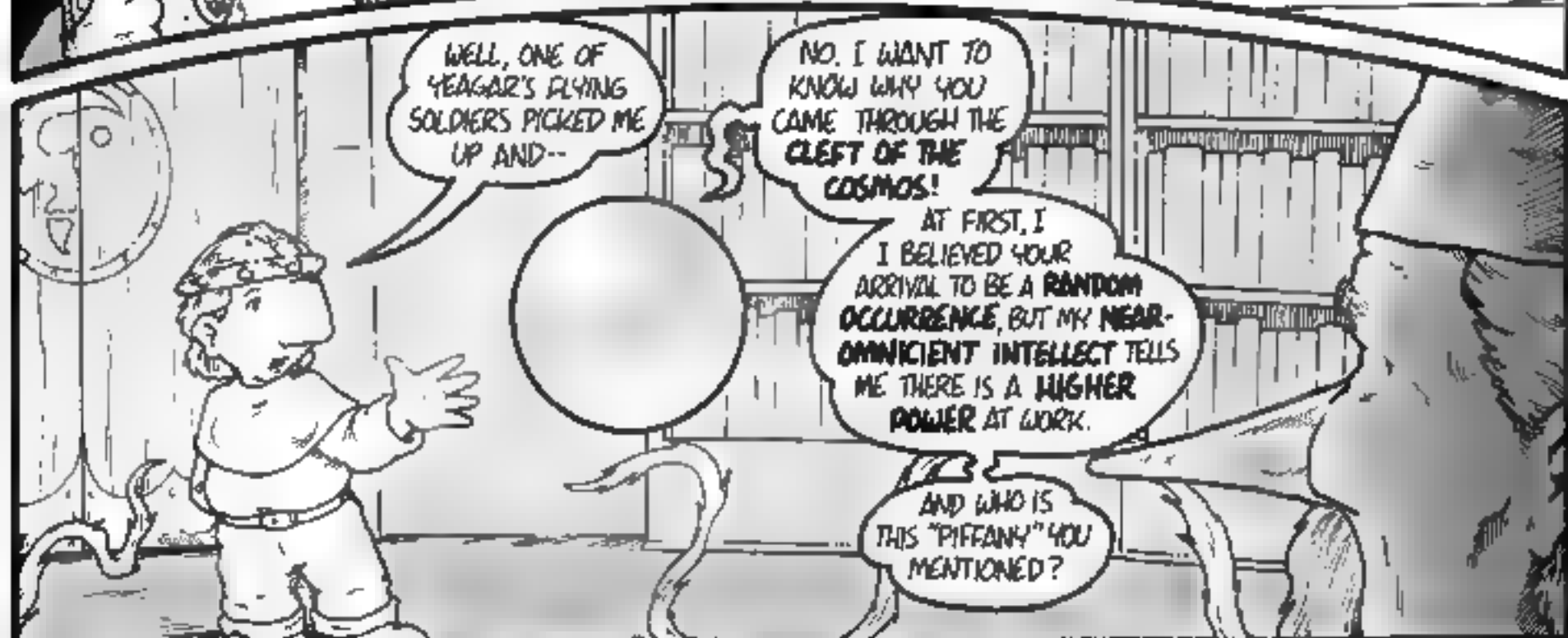
HAVEN'T ANY OF
YOU EVER DONE
A GOOD DEED?

I LET ONE OF
MY DADDY'S HOSTAGES
GO, ONCE...

SEE? THAT'S
A GOOD DEED!
NOW--

THEN I LET
MY PACK OF
RABID HOUNDS
GO PLAY
WITH HIM!





I KNOW YOU WANT TO RETURN TO YOUR WORLD. I CAN HELP YOU, BUT I REQUIRE A SERVICE FROM YOU IN RETURN.

IN THIS WORLD, BAPHUM'AL HAS IN SOME WAY TOUCHED OR TAINTED EVERYONE. YOU ARE CURRENTLY UNAFFECTED BY HIS POWER, BUT THAT MAY CHANGE IN TIME.

YEGOR AND I HAVE MORE FREEDOM THAN MOST, YET WE ARE MERE PUPPETS WHEN BAPHUM'AL WILLS IT. THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU.

YOU MUST HELP ME TO FREE OUR WORLD FROM BAPHUM'AL'S INFLUENCE.

HOW? I'M A HENCHMAN. HE'S A GOD. WHO WOULD YOU BET ON IN A FIGHT?

HE IS GOING TO MAKE HIS RULE OVER THIS PLANE **ABSOLUTE** IN ONE WEEK. HE IS PREPARING TO SHATTER THE ARTIFACTS OF HIGH POWER WHICH WERE WIELDED AGAINST HIM BY THE NOW-DEFUNCT LEGION OF ORDER.

WHEN THE LAST ARTIFACT IS NO MORE, THE PROPHECIES WILL BE FULFILLED, AND BAPHUM'AL WILL REIGN FOREVER. YOU WILL STEAL ONE OF THE ARTIFACTS AND TAKE IT WITH YOU INTO THE CLEFT.

BUT WHY ME?

YOU ARE BEYOND HIS NOTICE FOR THE MOMENT. WE WOULD SOONER THINK A GNAT COULD STOP HIM, LET ALONE A SUPPOSEDLY EXTINGUISHED HENCHMAN.

I BELIEVE THAT IF YOU TAKE ONE INTACT ARTIFACT THROUGH THE CLEFT, THE PROPHECIES **CAN'T** BE FULFILLED. PERHAPS THEN, BAPHUM'AL CAN BE STOPPED...

...OR AT LEAST THINGS MIGHT NOT GET ANY WORSE...

DARE I ASK
HOW I'M GOING TO
ACCOMPLISH THIS?

THAT'S UP TO YOU.
ONCE I GET YOU INTO THE
ARTIFACT CHAMBER, YOU'RE
ON YOUR OWN. IF I WAS
TO PLAN YOUR ESCAPE,
BAPHOMIAZAL COULD TAKE
IT FROM MY MIND.

I WILL SPEND
THE NEXT FEW
DAYS BRIEFING
YOU ON THE LAYOUT
OF THE FORTRESS
AND ITS
WEAKNESSES.

LOVELY. ALL I
HAVE TO DO IS
OUTGUT A DIETY
PIECE OF CAKE...

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, THE REVEREND MATRON HAS A GUEST...

AND HOW ARE
YOUR STUDENTS
FARING, SISTER
PIFFANKY?

OH, ABOUT AS GOOD AS CAN
BE HOPED FOR. I'VE MANAGED TO
GET DARION TO STOP BANISHING SOULS
TO NOT-NICE PLACES, RUISSA'S DEMONIC POSSESSION
MANIFESTS ONLY ONCE PER HOUR, AND I THINK
I'VE CONVINCED THYRELLIUS TO GIVE
UP CANNIBALISM.



THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT NEED I REMIND YOU THAT YOU'RE EXPECTED TO HAVE THEM RESPECTING THE LAWS OF THE LAND AND THOSE OF THE GODS BY THE END OF THE SEMESTER? IF YOU FAIL, YOUR STATUS IN THE CHURCH MAY BE... **DOWNGRADED**. YOU MIGHT EVEN LOSE YOUR DUCT TAPE PRIVILEGES.



BUT THEY'VE COME SO FAR IN ONLY A WEEK! I'VE SEEN THE RECORDS OF THE OTHER TEACHERS! EVEN THE ONES WHO SURVIVED DIDN'T ACCOMPLISH THIS MUCH WITH THOSE ICKY-BAD NAUGHTY SPAIN KIDS!

SISTER PIFFANKY, WE HAVE **STANDARDS**, AND THEY MUST BE MET. WHAT WOULD WE BE IF WE LET THEM SLIDE?



WELL, YES, BUT FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN, IT'S MOSTLY THEIR **PARENTS** THAT MAKE THEM NAUGHTY. HALF OF THE MOMMIES AND DADDIES AREN'T EVEN FROM THIS **DIMENSION**, AND THEY HAVEN'T BEEN ENCOURAGING THEIR KIDS TO DO NICE THINGS OR LEARN TO READ OR ANYTHING! IF THEY DON'T HAVE WHOLESDOME HOMES, A LOT OF THINGS I TEACH DON'T SEEM TO **STICK**!

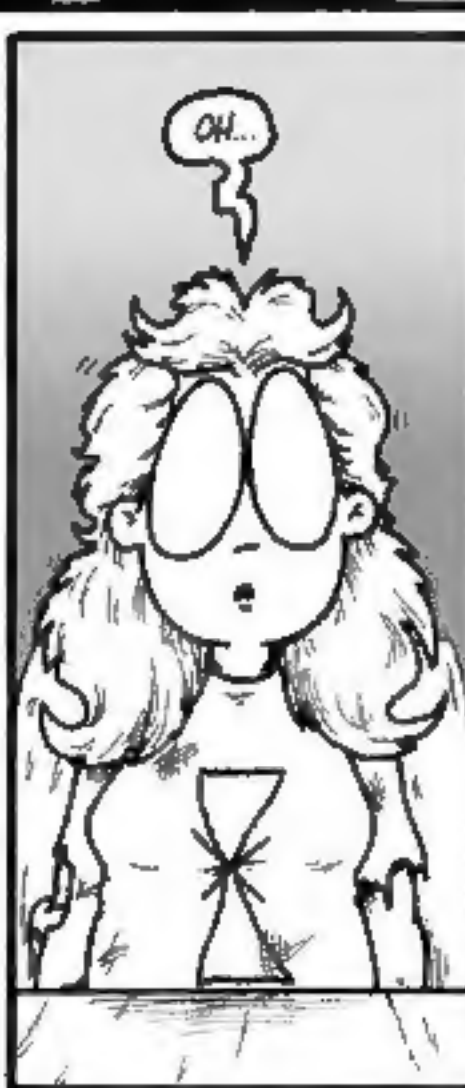


NOW, NOW. WE CAN'T POSSIBLY BLAME THE **PARENTS**. I'M SURE THEY DO THEIR BEST. NO, THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF THE STUDENTS SHOULD OBVIOUSLY BE THEIR **TEACHER'S** RESPONSIBILITY.



I GUESS... UM, CAN I ASK ABOUT MY REQUEST FOR **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**? I'VE HAD TO SELL SOME OF MY **POKEBEANIES** TO BUY PAPER AND PENCILS FOR MY CLASSROOM... I REALLY MISS MY "JUBILIEPUFF" BEANIE...

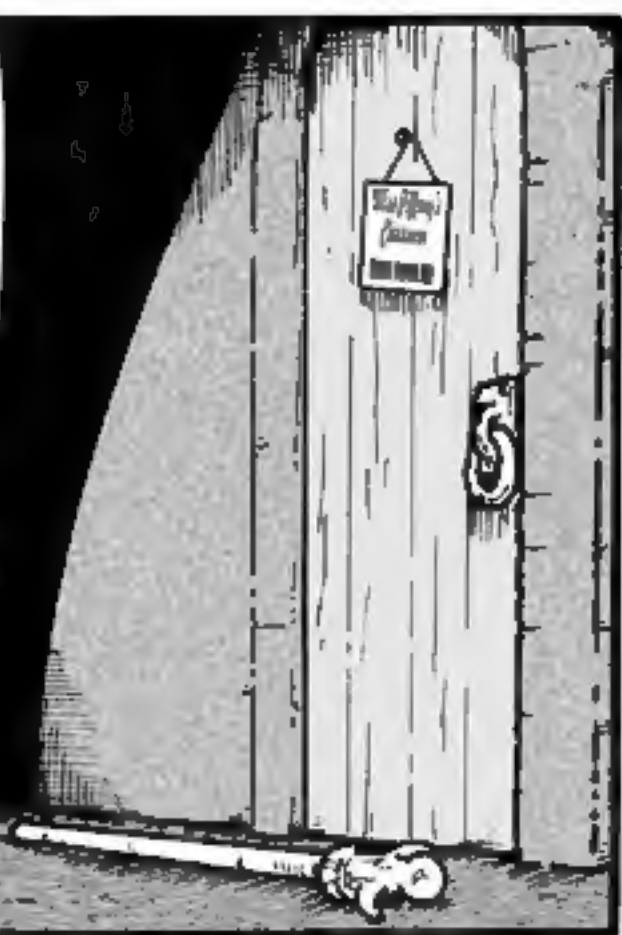
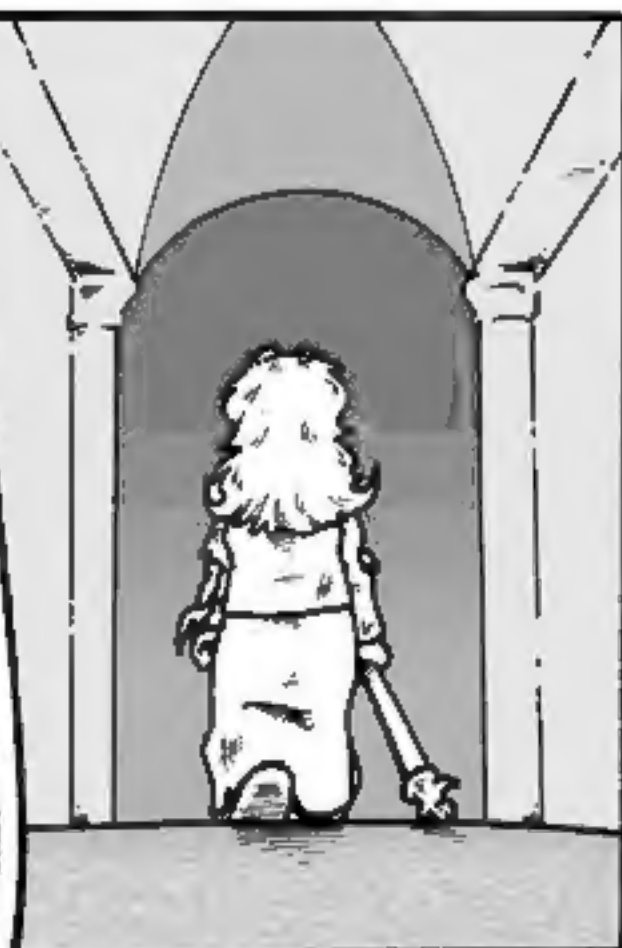
I ALREADY TOLD YOU: WHEN YOUR KIDS DEMONSTRATE ENOUGH **ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT**, THEN THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE WILL GIVE YOU THE SUPPLIES YOU ASKED FOR.



OH...



CRACK



MEANWHILE...



DANG! THAT'S THE FIFTH HENCHMAN THIS WEEK!

TELL ME ABOUT IT. UM, WHY DIDN'T YOU WAIT FOR HIM TO GET CLEAR BEFORE YOU COLLAPSED THE DUNGEON ENTRANCE?



HEY, DID YOU WANT THAT HORDE OF TROLLS TO COME OUT AND GET US? BESIDES, I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COMPLAINING WHEN WE HAD NODWICK TO TOSS AROUND!

THAT'S BECAUSE WE HAD A CLERIC WHO COULD REPAIR HIM WHENEVER WE KILLED HIM, YOU DOLT!!



WHAT? YOU'VE POWDERED NODWICK WITH YOUR STUPID SPELLS MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT!

OH, REALLY?! IS THAT A SINGLE-DIGIT NUMBER OR HAVE YOU STARTED DOING MATH WITH ALL OF YOUR FINGERS??!



WAIT A MINUTE. THIS IS GETTING US NOWHERE! LET'S FACE IT: WE NEED TO GET PIFFANNY BACK!

AGREED. WE'RE JUST NO GOOD WITHOUT OUR DUCT-TAPING COLLEAGUE.



THEN IT'S SETTLED! SO BEGINS OUR QUEST FOR PIFFANNY!!

To Be Continued...



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